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ABSTRACT

The Foster Care Data Archive is a five-state database that contains foster care career histories for all children who have been placed in a state-supervised substitute-care living arrangement. The Archive was started with five participating states--California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, and Texas--which together provide services to almost half of the total child substitute care population in the United States. The data for the Archive are extracted directly from the administrative data systems operated by each state's child welfare agency. The unique properties of this information are that it is comprehensive and that it is longitudinal at the level of individual children. Therefore, the complete child welfare history of every child who has been in the care and custody of these state systems in recent years can be described. This report presents archive data from the years 1988-1992 related to the nature of state foster care caseloads and child experiences within the child welfare service system of those five states. An interim report is also included that extends the available data for the 5 states through the end of 1993. The data provided are not evaluative for the state programs; however, they do provide a comparative frame of reference. (AA)

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